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## **Senate Creates Early Intervening Program *Kindergarten through third graders to receive additional educational support***

**Lansing** – Senator Valde Garcia, R-Howell, announced that the senate passed a three bill package last week aimed at providing early educational support to the state's youngest school children.

The bills, Senate Bills 328, 329 and 330, create the "Early Intervening Program." The program will monitor individual pupil learning for students in kindergarten through third grade by providing and supporting specific learning strategies in an effort to reduce the need for special education later in their school careers.

"The most critical time in a child's educational growth is during their first years in school," said Garcia. "If we are able to support certain developmental tools and strategies early in their childhood, it is less likely that these students will have to rely on special education classes in later years. The program is an essential tool for educators, parents and for the students themselves as they work toward a successful education experience."

Senate Bill 328 would permit local and intermediate school districts that receive Durant vs. State of Michigan settlement payments to use those funds for the Early Intervening Program.

The second bill in the package, Senate Bill 329, allocates \$1 million from the School Aid Fund for the 2005-06 fiscal year to the Michigan Department of Education to create grants for the program.

SB 330 would allow eligible school districts and public school academies who are currently receiving at-risk funding to also use those dollars for the Early Intervening Program.

The bills have been referred to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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